

541416

10 Rec'd PCT/EP 01 JUL 2005

(12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date
22 July 2004 (22.07.2004)

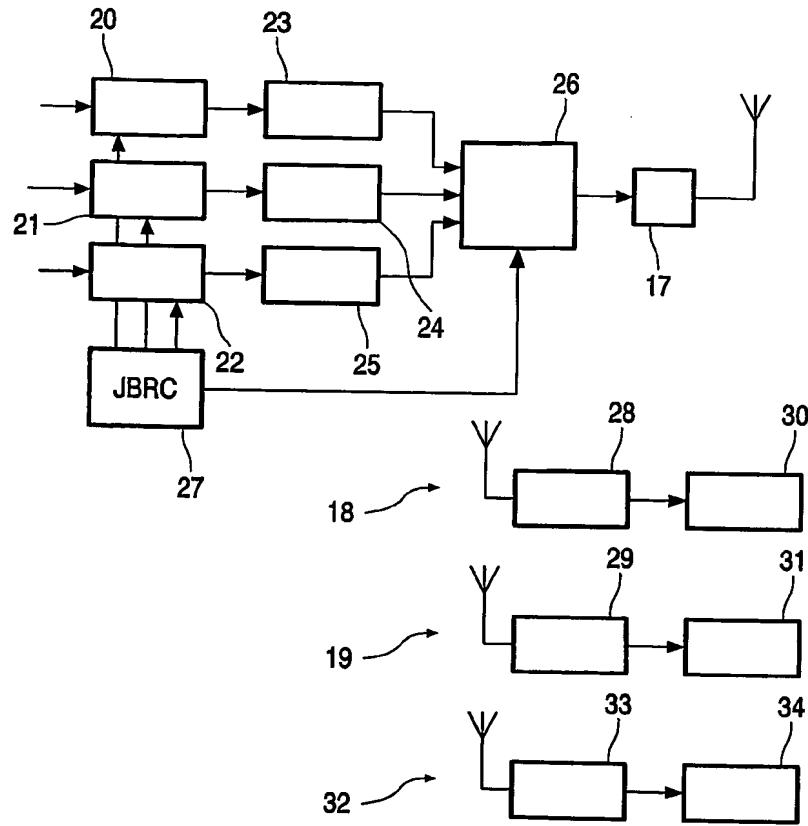
PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 2004/062182 A1

- (51) International Patent Classification⁷: **H04L 1/00** Standards, Cross Oak Lane, Redhill, Surrey RH1 5HA (GB).
- (21) International Application Number: PCT/IB2003/006165 (74) Agent: **WHITE, Andrew, G.**; Philips Intellectual Property & Standards, Cross Oak Lane, Redhill, Surrey RH1 5HA (GB).
- (22) International Filing Date: 19 December 2003 (19.12.2003) (81) Designated States (*national*): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PG, PH, PL, PT, RO, RU, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SY, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, YU, ZA, ZM, ZW.
- (25) Filing Language: English (84) Designated States (*regional*): ARIPO patent (BW, GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HU, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, RO, SE,
- (26) Publication Language: English
- (30) Priority Data: 0300359.7 7 January 2003 (07.01.2003) GB
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(54) Title: JOINT BIT RATE CONTROL



(57) Abstract: A gateway 15 of an in-home audio visual distribution system comprises first to third encoder or transcoders 20-22, each being associated with a respective buffer 23-25. Each encoder or transcoder and buffer combination process signals from a different input channel. Data signals from the buffers are scheduled by an earliest deadline first scheduler 26 for transmission over a wireless link via a transmitter 17. A joint bit rate controller 27 is arranged to control the encoders or transcoders to adopt a bit rate which is dependent on the amount of data stored in the buffers 23-25 awaiting transmission, particularly on the difference between the amount of data and a target amount. The output bit rate of the encoders or transcoders is dependent also on the complexity of the content being coded. Following a channel change or start-up event, the scheduler 26 is controlled to transmit data for the relevant channel with priority over data for the other channels.

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SI, SK, TR), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

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Published:

- *with international search report*
- *before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of receipt of amendments*